

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

unto their parent. There is a great difference, whether any Booke choose his Patrones, or finde them: This hath done both. For, so much were your L. L. likings of the seuerall parts, when they were acted, as before they were published, the Volume ask'd to be yours. We haue but collected them, and done an office to the dead, to procure his Orphanes, Guardians; without ambition either of selfe-profit, or fame: onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend, & Fellow aliue, as was our SHAKESPEARE, by humble offer of his playes, to your most noble patronage. Wherein, as we haue iustly obserued, no man to come neere your L. L. but with a kind of religious addresse; it hath bin the height of our care, who are the Presenters, to make the present worthy of your H. H. by the perfection. But, there we must also craue our abilities to be considerd, my Lords. We cannot go beyond our owne powers. Country hands reach forth milke, creame, fruites, or what they haue: and many Nations (we haue heard) that had not gummes & incense, obtained their requests with a leauened Cake. It was no fault to approch their Gods, by what meanes they could: And the most, though meanest, of things are made more precious, when they are dedicated to Temples. In that name therefore, we most humbly consecrate to your H. H. these remaines of your seruant Shakespeare; that what delight is in them, may be euer your L. L. the reputation his, & the faults ours, if any be committed, by a payre so carefull to shew their gratitude both to the liuing, and the dead, as is

Your Lordshippes most bounden,

IOHN HEMINGE.  
HENRY CONDELL.



To the great Variety of Readers.



From the most able, to him that can but spell: you are number'd. We had rather you were w. Especially, when the fate of all Bookes depend on your capacities: and not of your heads but of your purses. Well! It is now publique, wil stand for your priuiledges wee know: to and censure. Do so, but buy it first. That do

commend a Booke, the Stationer saies. Then, how odde souerain braines be, or your wisedomes, make your licence the same, and not. Iudge your fixe-pen'orth, your shillings worth, your furlings worth at a time, or higher, so you rise to the iust rates, and come. But, what euer you do, Buy. Censure will not driue a or make the lacke go. And though you be a Magistrate of wit, on the Stage at Black-Friers, or the Cock-pit, to arraigne Playes know, these Playes haue had their triall already, and stood out peales; and do now come forth quitted rather by a Decree of then any purchas'd Letters of commendation.

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to haue bene with the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set forth, and overseen his writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the of their care, and paine, to haue collected & publish'd them; and haue publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them: euen are now offer'd to your view cur'd; and perfect of their limbes; the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued the. Who, as a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresse of it. His and hand went together: And what he thought, he vttered with easinesse, that wee haue scarce receiued from him a blot in his. But it is not our prouince, who onely gather his works, and giue you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. And there we haue your diuers capacities, you will finde enough, both to draw, and you: for his wit can no more lie hid, then it could be lost. Reade therefore; and againe, and againe: And if then you doe not like, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to vnderstand him. we leaue you to other of his Friends, whom if you need, can be guides: if you neede them not, you can leade your selues, and And such Readers we wish him.